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Nanotechnology in the US House

posted by [JimLew](#) on Tuesday February 25, @03:53PM

[Gina Miller](#) writes

New Institutions

"A

*nanotechnology oversight bill originally introduced last October [Nanotechnology legislation introduced into US House] was submitted again last month: **Nanotech oversight bill reintroduced.** Another nanotech bill that was still in the works last October was introduced last week into the House: **Let's Make It Legal: New Nano Bill Would Create Permanent Program**"*

The EE Times reported Jan. 10 that the bill, sponsored by Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif., calls for industry and university experts to advise the Bush administration and Congress on the National Nanotechnology Initiative. The advisory panel would develop objectives for nanotechnology over the next decade and beyond, and would submit an annual report to the president and Congress on research progress by government agencies.

Small Times reported Feb. 18 "A long-awaited bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would put muscle on the federal government's nanotechnology efforts was introduced late last week. **The Nanotechnology Research and Development Act of 2003** [64KB PDF file] would establish the federal government's first permanent interagency research and development program that focuses on the industry." This House bill was introduced by Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., the powerful chairman of the House Science Committee, and is backed by the [NanoBusiness Alliance](#).

Besides establishing and coordinating a permanent federal nanotechnology program, the bill, according to Small Times, would "Put together a research program to identify societal and ethical concerns

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program to identify societal and ethical concerns related to nanotechnology. It would require that this research be incorporated, as much as possible, into federal nanotechnology projects."

According to a press release on the House Science Committee web site dated Feb. 14, 2003,
[Boehlert, Honda Introduce Nanotechnology Bill:](#)

House Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) and Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) last night introduced legislation that would authorize a national nanotechnology research initiative. Nanotechnology is the top interagency priority in the Administration's fiscal 2004 proposed budget for non-medical, civilian scientific and technological research and development.

"Nanotechnology may be the 'smallest' field of science - the manipulating of individual atoms. But I've come to understand that in science and technology, few things could actually be 'bigger' than nanotechnology - in terms of its potential to revolutionize scientific and engineering research, improve human health and bolster our economy," said Chairman Boehlert. "This bill will ensure that the federal government is investing significantly, and most importantly wisely, in this growing field."

H.R. 766, the Nanotechnology Research and Development Act of 2002, authorizes \$2.1 billion over three years for nanotechnology research and development programs at the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, NASA, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill provides a formal structure for coordination of research across the agencies, emphasizes interdisciplinary research, addresses societal concerns raised by nanotechnology, and requires outside

reviews of the program.

"This \$2.1 billion investment for nanotechnology research and development will go a long way in developing a new economic engine for this country," said Rep. Honda.

"Nanotechnology will have a dramatic impact on society, and it is critical that the U.S. has structures in place that allow us to assess and understand technical issues, as well as the social, ethical, philosophical, and legal issues that will arise. I am proud to be working with Rep. Boehlert on this legislation. Our bi-partisan effort is a testament of the strong support for nanotechnology in Congress."

Neither the press release nor the Small Times article mentions the relationship, if any, of the bill re-introduced by Honda in January to H.R. 766, but it appears that H.R. 766 incorporates the main features of Honda's earlier legislation.

Similar nanotechnology legislation (21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act, sponsored by Ron Wyden, D-Ore) advanced through the Senate Commerce Committee toward full Senate consideration last September (see Nanodot story [Senate Committee passes nanotech bill](#)). However, that legislation was not approved by the full Senate before the end of the legislative session. According to Small Times:

That bill then had to start from scratch, and this time Wyden was no longer the chairman of the Senate Science, Technology and Space subcommittee. With the Republicans now in control of the Senate, Sen. George Allen, R-Va. , has taken the lead on the nanotechnology bill, joined by Wyden. An Allen spokeswoman said nanotechnology is a top priority for Allen, but she could not predict when he would introduce the bill.

From the House Science Committee press release:

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and George Allen (R-VA) have already introduced a Senate nanotechnology bill. Boehlert said, "We're already been having conversations with both the Senate and the White House about nanotechnology, and I'm hopeful we can get a bill enacted this year. We will try to move the bill through the Science Committee before the April recess."

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